

but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). No matter how strong the compulsion to engage in sinful behavior, there is a way of escape. No matter how much a drunk salivates for another drink, he can resist the urge. No matter how much a smoker's lungs cry out for another drag of tar and nicotine, the smoker can deny himself another cigarette for the rest of his life. He simply must make up his mind to throw away the substance and never touch it again.

The answer is at once exactly that simple, but terribly hard in practice. One of the reasons why people die as drunks or addicts is not always because they don't want to quit, many desperately want to quit, but they simply never muster the strength of will necessary to resist sin.

I asked my brother and friend in East Texas what he thought of the argument some Christians make nowadays that one can drink a little as long as he doesn't get drunk. His answer was blunt and clear: *"Preacher, that is the stupidest thing I have ever heard in my life! How can any Christian make such an argument?"* He said *"I would not be in this predicament if I had not taken that first drink when I was a much younger man."* After thinking about it some more, he said: *"You know, preacher, every single person like me who drank himself nearly to death, bought the lie that he could handle one drink, and it would be okay. I believed the lie, and now look where I am today. My wife left me long ago, my kids don't want anything to do with me, I have no job, no money, and I live in this hole with my regrets, and on top of it, I have to fight every day not to go right back where I was."* I was reminded of the lie the devil told Eve: *"You shall not surely die"* (Genesis 3:4).

Thankfully, my friend is one who could see both sides of addiction clearly. His greatest regret was that he did all of that to himself. But, he also rejoiced that God was merciful to him, and he sustained himself with the hope of heaven (Colossians 1:5, 23). He did not quit drinking to get his family back. When he came to the realization that he had to quit drinking in order to go to heaven, he put away the bottle, cleaned out every drop of it from his apartment and began to fight the battle that he would fight until the day he died.

To my knowledge, my brother and friend never fell off the wagon. I preached his funeral and was confident in that report. One of the last things he told me before he died was: *"Preacher, if I ever convinced myself to take just one drink on a bad day, just to steady my nerves, I would wake up days later with a couple of empty whisky bottles sitting on the table, and another opened and half empty. Then, I would never come up for air ever again."* That is sobering stuff.

I hate sin. I hate the devil. I hate the lies people tell themselves.

Church of Christ

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[Http://www.westcolumbiatxcoc.com](http://www.westcolumbiatxcoc.com)

Sunday:

Bible Classes 9:00 a.m.
Worship 9:50 a.m.
Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.



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Addiction And The Christian

David Weaks

There are two basic views of addiction in the world. The first view says addiction is nothing more than spiritual and moral weakness and a lack of commitment to God. Then there is the view of liberal society which says addiction is a disease, pure and simple. Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton tweeted on September 16, 2016: *"Addiction is a disease, not a moral failing. We should support those who are struggling with it."* Hillary was dead wrong about this.

The truth lies between these two extremes. There are people who are fighting a daily battle against their lusts and desires and they are failing, but they can indeed win (1 Corinthians 10:13; Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30). Alcohol and drugs have a very powerful and controlling effect on the mind and body. Doctors say these substances create a physiological need that we call addiction. It is this change of the chemical makeup of the brain and nervous system that we are talking about. Yet, it was avoidable!

Hosea said: *"Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave the heart"* (Hosea 4:11; see also: Isaiah 28:7).

Addiction is very much a moral issue. No one forced the addict to take his first drink or dose of drugs, nor his second, his third, or his hundredth. It was always his choice to start using those things, and it is his choice to repudiate and leave behind whatever it is that he craves so overwhelmingly.

Let's define the words *disease* and *addiction*. Disease is the disruption of the normal functioning of the human body on a cellular level. Of disease, [Dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com) says the following: *"a disordered or incorrectly functioning organ, part, structure, or system of the body resulting from the effect of genetic or developmental errors, infection, poisons,..."* Cancer is the result of cells growing out of all boundaries of control, and the unchecked growth destroys nearby healthy bodily tissues. Cancer was not chosen, it just happened.

Of addiction, The Merriam-Webster Dictionary says: “*a compulsive, chronic, physiological or psychological need for a habit-forming substance, behavior, or activity having harmful physical, psychological, or social effects and typically causing well-defined symptoms (such as anxiety, irritability, tremors, or nausea) upon withdrawal or abstinence : the state of being addicted.*”

From these two definitions, it is clear that *disease* and *addiction* are two different things. Both are destructive. One is caused by pathogens, the other is caused by choices and the repeated abuses of sinful things.

How does addiction manifest itself? To answer that question, I would like to tell you about a friend of mine; a Christian man who died a drunk. Some would call him a “recovered alcoholic,” but he said “*Don’t you believe it preacher, I haven’t touched a drop of alkyhol in five years, but I am still just an old drunk. I will always be an alkyholic for the rest of my life*” (He was an East Texas man, and that’s how he talked). He echoed what drug addiction therapists say: an addict will always be an addict. The fight to remain off of whatever it is that ensnared them is a daily fight.

My friend, had lost his family, his job, his reputation, and all else that mattered because of his addiction to booze. However, in the last five years of his life he managed to bring his life back under control and to reject the substance that had controlled his whole life for so long.

I remember asking him: “So you are completely free of the grip of alcohol, then?” His answer was sober and firm: “*No sir, I am not. If I let down my guard for even a second, I know that I will hear the bottle calling to me. Every day is a fight against sin, and I want a drink right now so bad I can’t hardly stand it.*”

I asked my friend to explain to me what it felt like to be addicted to alcohol. He said: “*Well, here is the best I can do to help you understand. I haven’t had a single drink of alcohol of any kind in more than five years, but I am aware every single day that it is all around me. It’s like my brain has radar. I know that the gas station a hundred yards from my apartment sells beer, and I can almost smell it and taste it. I know some of the people in this apartment complex have whisky in their rooms, and I wake up in the morning thinking I smell bourbon. Every day I think about alcohol many times, and it is usually the last thing I think about before I go to sleep, and it is the first thing I think about in the morning when I wake up. When I first gave up drinking, my hand would reach for a non-existent whisky bottle when my eyes opened in the morning.*” He went on to say that no matter what it took he was determined to stay dry the rest of his days, but he had also surrendered the fantasy that he would someday get where he wouldn’t crave alcohol anymore.

Finally, I asked my brother and friend, what he thought about Christians who denied the idea that there was really any such a thing as

addiction. He just shook his head and said, “*I Thank the Lord that they can be that ignorant, because it means that they have never been there themselves, and I am grateful for that.*” He was not bitter toward those who doubted his problem was real. Mostly, because he knew it was real, but he also knew that he did it to himself.

What should the Christian’s attitude be toward the subject of addiction?

First thing’s first: *Addiction is not helplessness.* The Bible teaches that we are not helpless against sin. There is such a thing as sex addiction, and addiction to pornography. There is drug addiction, alcohol addiction, tobacco addiction, etc. Whatever it is that enslaves the hearts of men can be resisted. Solomon didn’t have to have seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, it was a choice he made (1 Kings 11:1-3). He wrecked his life with his lust for and addiction to women, just as surely as any man who ever lingered long at the wine. No one forces men and women to choose the path of addiction and self-destruction. The operative word is “self-destruction.” Addicts do all of this to themselves. We are told to resist the devil and he will flee from us (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9). Addicts just don’t resist.

Second: *addiction is an unintended consequence of the choice to sin.* Addiction simply doesn’t happen to those who do not choose to do what is sinful. In Proverbs 20:1, Solomon said: “*Wine is a mocker, strong drink arouses brawling.*” Then, later, Solomon

said: “*Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, Those who go in search of mixed wine*” (Proverbs 23:29-30). Please notice the next verse: Solomon said: “*Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly*” (vs. 31).

Solomon’s advice proves that addiction is the fault of the addict. The one who became addicted to alcohol started by looking longingly on that delicious looking liquid in the cup. Then, in time he decided to try a drink. Then, before too long, he was so enamored with it that he rarely went a day without at least one glass of wine. Eventually, he made sure part of his grocery budget included wine. Then, finally he ate very little, slept only occasionally, because all he cared about was his wine. Most of his livelihood was eaten up by the brewer’s and vintner’s arts.

The point Solomon is making in these texts is that one should never go down that road to begin with. It is self-destructive. The beautiful and delicious looking liquid known as alcohol will at the last bite and destroy you.

Third: *There is a way of escape from addiction.* This is true of any sin! When Paul addressed the sinfulness of Israel during their history, he finished with this: “*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able,*